

## **Supported Employment Leadership Network (SELN)**

### **Meeting**

**Date:** August 28, 2014  
**Location:** 111 N Sanders Rm 207  
**Time:** 10:00 – 3:00 pm.

**Attendees:** Kelly McNurlin (DDP), Barbara Varum (VR), Misti Hofland (VR), Mike Mahoney (Family Outreach), Phyllis Astheimer (Family Outreach), Sally Tilleman (CMHB), Diana Tavary (PLUK), Charlie Briggs (ESGW), Jenny Harris (DLI), Mike Hermanson (DETD), Lindsey Carter (DDP), Jannis Conselyea (DDP), Karen Cech (recorder).

**Phone Attendees:** Diane Reidelbach (Job Connection), Susan Moreno (Reg 3 DDP), Ellen Condon (U of M), Kurtis Mayne (ORI), Marti Wangren (MACDS).

Meeting was opened with introduction of participant and a review of the morning agenda.

### **Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) -**

The Supported Employment Leadership Network (SELN) meeting began with an update from Barbara Varum of Vocational Rehabilitation about Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA). President Obama signed WIOA into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA reauthorizes the Rehabilitation Act through 2020. The last reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act occurred in 1998. Reauthorization has an emphasis on “high expectations and competitive, integrated employment.” VR believes in the new direction they are going but there will be growing pains.

There are new definitions related to WIOA that Barb will send to Kelly to attach to the SELN minutes.

There is a **strong focus on transitions**/youth with disabilities, competitive, integrated employment and transition from High School to post-secondary ed. Reauthorization requires counselors to work on **pre-employment transition activities** with individuals aged 14-21. Pre-employment transition activities are defined as: school based preparatory experiences, job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences and counseling in transition to post-secondary programs. VR has been actively involved in transition activities with High Schools across the state for the past six-years, and with reauthorization, will be more involved in the years to come. Reauthorization encourages eligible individuals to **pursue advanced training** in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (including computer science) medicine, law or business.

**Sub-minimum wage:** Youth (ages 14-24) cannot immediately enter sub-minimum wage programs. They must first:

- Apply for VR Services
- Receive training in job setting soft skills
- Have experiences in competitive, integrated employment
- Receive an explanation of their rights to work at or above minimum wage.
- If entering a sub-minimum wage program, they must have a plan for moving to competitive, integrated employment.

**Working directly with employers** is another emphasis in reauthorization: “working with the local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities, including internships, summer employment, apprenticeships and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year.”

**Reduced time-lines:** Counselors used to have 120 day from eligibility to IPE development. This has changed to 90 days, although if the counselor completes an IPE extension with a valid justification, it can go longer. This went into effect immediately.

VR does have a concern about the **reduced qualifications** for VR counselors: prior to reauthorization, a master’s degree was required. This is no longer the case on the federal level. A bachelor’s degree in business would now be allowable. Montana VR will maintain the master’s degree as long as RSA continues funding the RSA scholarships for the master’s programs.

It will be some time before the new regulations are written.

The SELN workgroup offered their assistance in the moving forward stages and that John Butterworth and Rie Kennedy-Lizotte could be contacted if some guidance is needed. Handouts that Barb distributed at the meeting will be attached to the minutes.

#### **Update on Extended Employment Program -**

The Extended Employment (EE) Program in the VR program is additional support for an individual to continue working. The services include job coaching and supervised work crews. This program is only available to consumers being served by VR.

The EE Program is moving forward in helping to get individuals off the waiting list for VR services. Some of the waiting is for programs to sign off on funding between programs. VR is still hoping to serve these individuals instead of having them wait for services. In some areas of the state there are no providers to serve individuals and VR is continually looking for new providers.

The VR State Plan for Montana is on the VR website and implementation will begin October 1, 2014.

### **Curriculum Update -**

The employment curriculum training is on the DDP website under Training at <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/dsd/ddp/invest.shtml> . This is not a mandatory training but is available for providers to incorporate into their training. Diana Tavary who self-directs reviewed the training and was impressed. She will be requiring her staff to take the curriculum. Jannis Conselyea reviewed the training. She thought it was excellent and thanked the workgroup for their input and time in developing the training.

The ODEP training through web-ex was presented to the workgroup in the afternoon.

The SELN meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.